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The Vulgate Chapters and Numbered Verses in the Hebrew Bible.

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THE division into chapters which is now universally adopted was first made in the Latin Bible in the thirteenth century.[1] It was employed in the concordances of the Vulgate which gave Rabbi Isaac Nathan[2] (about 1440) the idea of the first Hebrew concordance. In his concordance he cites, first, by the number of the Vulgate chapter, and second, by the number of the Massoretic verse in the chapter, precisely as we do.[3] To make possible the application of this system to the Hebrew Bible, he appended a table giving the Hebrew words corresponding to the beginning of each chapter of the Vulgate, and the whole number of Massoretic verses in each chapter.[4] For convenience of reference, however, it was necessary that the beginning of each chapter should be indicated by its number in the margin of the Hebrew Bible, and those who used Rabbi Nathan's concordance or adopted his convenient method of citation by chapters, doubtless made such notes in their copies.[5]

[1] Probably by Stephen Langton. See Gregory, *Prolegomena*, etc., 164–166; also Schmid, *Ueber verschiedene Eintheilungen der heiligen Schrift, insbesondere über die Capitel-Eintheilung Stephan Langton's im XIII. Jahrhundert.* 1892.

[2] On the title page of the first edition of his Concordance, Venice, 1523, he is called R. Mordechai Nathan, but in the preface he calls himself Isaac Nathan. See Buxtorf, Preface to his edition of the Concordance.

[3] The following is his own account of his procedure: ולמה שראיתי שהמעתיק ספרי הקדש בלא"טין חלק הספרים למספר הפרשיות מה שאין כן בספרינו רשמתי הפסוקים כלם לפי מספרם למנין הפרשיות גם רשמתי מספר הפסוקים לפי מה שהם אצלנו למען ימצו בנקלה על מקומותיהם.

[4] This table is reprinted in the Concordances of Calasius and Buxtorf.

[5] For some deviations from the accepted division of chapters in Athias's edition of 1667, he professed to have the authority of a Hebrew manuscript; this could only be a copy in which the beginning of the chapters had been noted from R. Nathan's apparatus. See Leusden, *Philologus Hebræus*, Dissert. iii. § 14. On the advantages of this method of citation see Elias Levita, Preface to *Bachur* (1518).

The chapters were not marked in the earliest printed editions. It is commonly said that they were first introduced in the second quarto edition published by Daniel Bomberg, Venice, 1521.[6] This is an error; they appear in both the preceding Bomberg editions, the folio of (1517–) 1518 (the first Rabbinical Bible, edited by Felix Pratensis) and the first quarto, of 1518.[7]

In the books of Samuel, Kings, Ezra-Nehemiah, and Chronicles, the numbering of the Vulgate chapters follows the usage of the church, which divides each of these books into two.[8] Accordingly, in the folio of 1518 the numeration begins anew at 2 Sam. i., 2 Ki. i., Neh. i., 2 Chron. i.; but the division is not in any way recognized in the text. Thus, while Samuel (1 Sam.) has an ornamental title, 2 Sam. i. runs on without a break after 1 Sam. xxxi., and so in the other cases. The beginning of Nehemiah is indicated by the numeral i., but the running title, Ezra, is carried on. Only at 2 Ki. i. is there a marginal note, כאן מתחילין הלועזים ספר מלכי רביעי, "Here the Greeks and Latins begin the Fourth Book of Kings," and at 2 Chron. i., the note ספר שני. With this the quarto of 1518 exactly agrees. In the quarto of 1521,[9] we find at 2 Ki. i. the marginal note, ספר ד׳; at Neh. i., ספר נחמיה (but still with the running title עזרא); at 2 Chron. i., ספר שני. Separate titles or head-pieces for 2 Sam., 2 Ki., Neh., 2 Chron., do not appear in the Hebrew Bible till a much later time.

We have seen that Rabbi Nathan in his concordance cites by the number of the Vulgate chapter and the number of the Massoretic verse in the chapter.[10] After it became usual in editions of the Hebrew Bible to designate the beginning of each chapter by a numeral, it was not a long step to the introduction of numerals for the verses

[6] See Buhl, *Kanon und Text des A. T.*, 1891, p. 229; Ryle, *Canon of the O. T.*, p. 238. The root of the error is probably Le Long-Masch, I. 19, where in enumerating the differences between the Bomberg edition of 1521 and the Brescia Bible, Masch writes: "5. capita librorum litteris hebraicis sunt numeratæ." As nothing of the kind is said about its predecessors, some one inferred that these numbers were introduced for the first time in 1521.

[7] I possess a copy of the folio; the quarto I have examined in the library of Union Theological Seminary, New York. Elias Levita, in the Advice to the Reader, prefixed to his Massoreth ha-Massoreth (Venice, Bomberg, 1538), says that Bomberg introduced the Latin chapters, and implies clearly enough that this was done in the first folio and the first quarto. The passage is strangely mistranslated by Ginsburg in his edition, p. 85.

[8] See Elias Levita, Preface to *Bachur*, 1518.

[9] In the library of Union Theological Seminary.

[10] See also Pagninus, Preface to his Hebrew Lexicon (1529).

also, thus saving the necessity of counting, at every reference, from the beginning of the chapter. At first, a numeral was affixed only to every fifth verse (1, 5, 10, 15, 20, etc.); subsequently each verse was designated by a numeral. No one seems ever to have investigated the origin of the verse numeration;[11] writers on the history of the text have gone on copying the mistakes of their predecessors with increase of their own. The climax is reached in a recent English book in which we read: "The division into verses, which appeared in the *Editio Sabioneta*[12] of the Pentateuch (1557), does not seem to have been applied to the whole Hebrew Canon before the edition of Athias (1661)"; and again, "If the principle of the division into verses be ultimately of Jewish origin, the *numeration* adopted was borrowed from Rob. Stephen's Edition of the Vulgate (1555)."[13]

It would be impossible to condense more misinformation into the same compass; every statement in these sentences is erroneous. It is not merely "the principle of the division into verses" which "is ultimately of Jewish origin"; the existing verses are the basis of the whole system of accents; they are carefully enumerated in the oldest Massora, for example, in the St. Petersburg codex of the Prophets (A.D. 916); the verse divisions appear in every codex, and in every edition that was ever printed. Professor Ryle has confounded the division into verses with the marginal numeration of the verses, which is commonly, though erroneously, believed to have been first employed in the Sabbioneta Pentateuch of 1557.[14]

The ultimate source of the statement that the verses were numbered for the first time in this edition is G-B. De Rossi, who in his description of it writes:[15] "In editione hac non solum capitibus sed

[11] See Eichhorn, *Einleitung*[4], I. 266 n.

[12] The name of the town is Sabbioneta; see De Rossi, *Annali ebreo-tipografici di Sabbioneta*, 1780; Lagarde, *Mittheilungen*, II. 166 n. If it were necessary to write "Sabbioneta edition" in Latin, *Editio Sabioneta* is hardly the way most scholars would prefer to write it, even with the example of Berliner and Buhl (1885) before them.

[13] H. E. Ryle, *The Canon of the Old Testament*, 1892, p. 238. Compare Horne's Introduction, 10 ed. (S. Davidson) II. 29: "The introduction of verses into editions of the Hebrew Bible proceeded from Athias, . . . in the first edition, 1661. They had been previously in the Vulgate so early as 1558." (!)

[14] So Buhl, *Kanon und Text*, 229: "Die Numerierung der Verse setzt natürlich die Kapiteleintheilung voraus. Sie findet sich zum ersten Male in der Sabbionetaausgabe des Pentateuchs 1557, im ganzen A. T. erst 1661 (Athias)."

[15] *Annali ebreo-tipografici di Sabbioneta*, Parma, 1780, p. 23 = *Annales Typographicæ Ebraicæ Sabionetenses*, etc. Ex Italicis Latinos fecit M. Jo. Frid. Roos, Erlangen, 1783, p. 27. I quote the translation.

quinto etiam cujuscunque capitis versiculo numerus additur; et me quidem judice prima omnium hæc est editio, saltem primarum una, in quibus hoc obvium est." Later writers transformed this cautious statement into the positive assertion that this was the first edition in which the verses, or more properly, every fifth verse (א, ה, י, טו, etc.), were designated by numerals.

In reality the verses were numbered throughout in this way in Bomberg's Great Bible of 1547–1548 (4 vols. fol.);[16] and as they were not so numbered in any of the preceding Bomberg editions,[17] we may affirm with some confidence that the system was first introduced in this second (or, if that of 1518 be counted in the series, third) Rabbinical Bible. The convenience of this method of numeration was soon recognized; Bomberg's example is followed in the Sabbioneta Pentateuch (1557), the Plantin Bible of 1566,[18] the octavo Bible of De Gara, Venice, 1568–1572,[19] etc. It was not, however, universally adopted; the edition of Manasseh ben Israel, Amsterdam, 1635 f., and the Mantua Bible, 1742–1744, for example, have no verse numerals.

That the numeration of the verses was first extended to the whole Bible by Athias in 1661, is, of course, an absurd blunder. Aside from the Great Bible of 1547–1548, several of the best known editions of the sixteenth century are numbered throughout. The currency of this error is the more remarkable because the preface to the edition of 1661 (by Leusden) contains a perfectly clear account of the innovation which Athias made.[20] A somewhat fuller statement is found in Leusden's *Philologus Hebræo-Græcus*, Dissert. iii., § 10, which I transcribe. Leusden argues that the division into verses dates from the authors of the Old Testament; "Sed olim in Bibliis Hebraicis ad marginem non solebant exprimi literæ Hebraicæ, denotantes distinctionem versuum; ut videre est in antiquis Bibliis Hebraicis Bombergi, Munsteri, aliorumque editionibus. Postea circa medium fere præcedens seculum quintus quilibet versus ad marginem fuit annotatus literis Hebraicis א, ה, י, טו, כ, etc. Tandem anno 1660 singuli versus Latinis numericis notis (excepto quinto quolibet versu, qui more antiquo literis Hebraicis exprimitur) in Bibliis Hebraicis editionis Amstelodamensis (me suadente et instigante) ad bonum

[16] I have a copy of this edition in my library.

[17] See C. rpzov, *Critica sacra*, 2 ed. (1748), p. 420–421.

[18] In my library.

[19] Le Long-Masch, I. 30.

[20] Compare also the preface to the edition of 1667.

publicum a Josepho Athia distinctæ sunt; quales notæ numericæ numquam antehac ulli textui Hebraico appositæ fuerant." Leusden thus claims for himself the credit of an improvement in the method of numbering introduced in Athias's edition, by which verses 2, 3, 4; 6, 7, 8, 9; etc., were designated by Arabic numerals, as in our common editions.

The assertion, however, that such numerals had not previously been affixed to any edition of the Hebrew text, requires qualification, if not correction.[21] In the Antwerp Polyglott (1569–1572), Vols. I.–IV., every verse of the Hebrew text has its Arabic numeral; and this is the case also in the separate edition of the Hebrew text with interlinear Latin translation which forms a supplemental volume (sometimes numbered VII., sometimes VIII., more properly perhaps, VI.) to that Polyglott (1571). This usage is followed also in the numerous later editions and reprints of this volume, including the octavo Bible "ex officina Plantiniana Raphelengii," 1610–1615, and the Leipzig reprint of 1657 in folio. The verses of the Hebrew text are numbered throughout by Arabic numerals in the Commelin Polyglott also (1586, 1599, 1616).

Professor Ryle is equally unfortunate in his remaining assertion, that "the *numeration* adopted was borrowed from Rob. Stephen's [*sic*] Edition of the Vulgate (1555)." Aside from the fact that the numeration is found in the Hebrew Bible eight years earlier, it is well known that the numbering of the (Massoretic) verses in the margin of the Latin Bible was not first introduced by Robert Stephens in his Vulgate of 1555.[22] In 1509 Henry Stephens printed Le Fèvre d'Étaples' *Quincuplex Psalterium* with Arabic numerals for every verse. In 1528 the whole Bible, in the Latin version of Pagninus, was published at Lyons, with the verses indicated in the same way; and in the Old Testament the numeration of the Massoretic verses in the Vulgate chapters is identical with that which we use.

To sum up, then: the Vulgate chapters were introduced into the Hebrew Bible in the first two Bomberg editions, the folio and the quarto of 1518; the numeration of the verses was introduced in Bomberg's Great Bible of 1547–1548, in which every fifth verse (1, 5, 10, etc.) is designated by the Hebrew numeral; the use of

[21] In the preface of 1661 he says only: Sed nulla Biblia quod scio, hactenus edita sunt, in quibus ita distincte versus discernuntur.

[22] See W. Wright in Kitto's Cyclopædia, *s.v.* Verse; Ezra Abbot in Gregory's *Prolegomena* to Tischendorf's Greek New Testament, *Editio octava critica maior*, p. 167 *sqq.*, or his *Critical Essays*, Boston, 1888, p. 464 *sqq.*

Arabic numerals for the intervening verses (2, 3, 4; 6, 7, 8, 9; etc.) was introduced by Leusden–Athias in 1661, though there were older editions (in Polyglotts or with interlinear Latin version) in which *every* verse was indicated by an Arabic numeral.